

# ECCO Orange Inc.

Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange

## President's Report to the Fifth Annual General Meeting 21 September, 2011.

I have much pleasure in presenting the President's Report to the Fifth Annual General Meeting of ECCO Orange Inc.

ECCO Orange was launched in April 2006, and for the past five years has worked extremely hard to achieve its aims as initially conceived with regard to environmental education, awareness and activism, and climate action in the Orange community,

ECCO General Meetings and Public Meetings continue to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, at the Environmental Learning Facility (ELF) at the Orange Showground, and Committee Meetings, open to all members, are held regularly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month. Wherever possible General Meetings aim to address current and critical environmental issues, and when special guest speakers are invited, these meetings are widely promoted as a Public Meeting and usually attract up to 80 persons, with ECCO business being kept to a minimum. Committee Meetings spend considerable time on the planning of events, campaigns and submissions.

During the latter part of 2010 and early 2011, considerable effort was put into the campaign to ensure Orange's neighbourhood parks, the Ploughmans Creek Wetland and the Bloomfield Bushland were zoned for public recreation or environmental management in the new Orange Local Environment Plan. This effort was rewarded when Orange City Council agreed to change the draft LEP to address these issues. Park surveys, community meetings and rallies, and significant media exposure ensured overwhelming community support.

Unfortunately submissions objecting to the rezoning of the DPI land at Bloomfield, and the subsequent Concept Plan for residential development were largely rejected by the Department of Planning. However some of ECCO's criticism of lack of open space and layout resulted in some minor modifications to the plan. A final decision by the Department of Primary Industry as to whether or not they will in fact proceed with the sale of Research Station land is still pending.

A summary of ECCO's main achievements and contributions during 2010/ 2011 reveals the extent of our commitment to fulfilling our aims; something all members can be very proud of.

### Public Meetings:

- Draft LEP Explained. David Waddell, OCC. 8 September
- Water Sensitive Urban Design. Diana Kureen, CWCMA. 27 October
- Ploughmans Valley Community Meeting, 8 February
- Constructed Wetlands. Martin Haege, Geolyse. 23 February
- Macquarie River Pipeline. Chris Devitt, OCC & Tony Perry, Central Tablelands Water. 23 March
- Renewable Energy and Wind Farms. Grant Christopherson, Central Tablelands Renewable Energy Precinct & Jonathon Upson, Infagen Energy. 27 April
- Groundwater Forum. 25 May
- Orange's Parks and Wetlands. Roger Smith, OCC & Bill Josh, CVA. 22 June

### Events:

- National Tree Day, 31 July.
- Theatre Party to "Food Inc." 22 August.
- Orange Rotary Club Enviro Expo, 18 September.
- ECCO Sustainable Homes and Gardens Open Day, 19 September.
- Biodiversity Discovery Day at Orange Botanic Gardens. 17 October.
- World Wetland Day Rally, Ploughmans Creek Wetland. 2 February.
- Rotary Experience Orange Expo. 27 February
- Clean Up Australia Day, 6 March.
- Theatre Screening of "Gasland". 24 March.
- Earth Hour, Picnic Under The Stars at Mt Lindsay. 26 March.
- World Migratory Bird Day. Ploughmans Creek Wetland Bird Walk. 15 May.
- Clean Up Day in Glenroi. 19 June

### Submissions:

- Orange City Council (OCC), Orange Local Environment Plan.
- Department of Planning. DPI land at Bloomfield Concept Plan

- Orange City Council / Dept of Planning. No development on Bloomfield Bushland
- Orange City Council. Retain Orange Showground for public recreation.

#### **Community Education, Engagement and Support:**

- Glenroi Heights Public School Kitchen Garden Project, Weekly working bees
- Orange Community Garden, Monthly working bees
- EarthFirst Weekly column in CWD, coordinated by Peter West, Haidee Nelson and Meg Bannigan
- ECCO and OCAN Quarterly Local Environment Awards to St Mary's Primary School, Bill Josh (Parks Alive Coordinator), Wisharts Automotive and Pete's Car Wash
- Calare Public School Environment excursion to Ploughmans Creek Wetlands
- ECCO representation on Orange City Council's Community Committees; Environmental Sustainability, Strategic Planning and Land Use, Orange Botanic Gardens, Tree Sustainability, Cultural Heritage, Tidy Towns, and Companion Animals.
- Orange Community Radio 107.5FM. Fortnightly talks.
- Orange City Council. Shaping Orange Strategic Plan

#### **Climate Action:**

Throughout the year ECCO, through its Climate Action subcommittee (OCAN) of Nick King and Brian Phillips, has been very proactive in organising a range of important environmental and Climate Action initiatives including;

- 100% Renewables Campaign and Survey.
- Earth Hour Celebrations
- Attendance at Renewable Energy Conference, Port Macquarie (Nick and Brian)
- Attendance at Climate Action Network Conference, Melbourne (Brian)

#### **Other Activities:**

ECCO Committee representatives met with Andrew Gee on the 7 April, following his election to State Parliament, on a wide range of local environmental issues and planning proposals.

Nick King has represented ECCO on the 2011 Sustainable Living Week Planning Committee, and also the Bowen Public School Indigenous Garden Planning Committee.

The considerable efforts put in by Brian Phillips, Nick King and Tony Smith in promoting the concept of natural burials has paid dividends with Orange City Council resolving to commit funds to developing an area of land in the grounds of the Orange Cemetery as a site for natural burials.

ECCO's website continues to fulfil an important role in communicating with the wider community; often resulting in enquiries from throughout NSW and interstate. Special thanks to Stephen Nugent for his continuing role as webmaster.

The ECCO Committee of Peter West, Stephen Nugent, Nick King, Phil Stevenson, Tony Smith, Susan Sanders, Col Foster, Brian Phillips, Yvette Black, Simon Wright and Rod Holcombe have met monthly throughout the year between General Meetings and deserve special acknowledgement.

A recent decision to provide drinks and nibbles after our monthly meetings has been welcomed and appreciated by members and visitors, and thanks go to Jenny and Tony Smith for organising this.

It is appropriate to make special mention and thank our treasurer, Col Foster who will be leaving Orange shortly to reside in the Blue Mountains. Col has made an invaluable contribution to ECCO since its inception and has been an enthusiastic participant in all activities and he will be greatly missed, not only by ECCO but also by the Daroo Orange Urban Landcare Group which he has so capably led for many years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members, supporters and friends who have contributed to the success of ECCO this year. It has been a great honour for me, once again, to have served as President of an organization with passionate, committed, and genuinely nice people.

We must however, work very hard in the coming year to grow our membership and to gain support from younger people and families...the sustainability of ECCO will be determined by how well we can achieve this key objective.

Neil Jones  
President.

21 September, 2011